

## SECTION 5: SIGN DESIGN STANDARDS

### SIGNS

Within a historic district or on an individual historic resource, commercial signage can convey an aesthetic that complements the architectural style and that highlights the historic significance of the district or property with the use of appropriate materials, placement, and color.

Design Guidelines for new and historic signs in commercial historic structures are aligned with preservation goals to respect the context of the historic structure and to create a pedestrian friendly environment. These Guidelines also follow regulations set forth for the City, State, and Nation to conserve and protect scenic beauty and the aesthetic character of the City by reducing visual clutter and optimizing communication.

#### Historic Signs

Historic signs shall be permitted to remain and to be repaired, restored, structurally altered, reconstructed, or relocated utilizing the Certificate of Appropriateness process. Historic signs may possess intrinsic importance or may acquire that importance as a result of their association with the historic resource with which the signs have become associated.

In determining whether a sign qualifies as “historic”, the HEPB shall consider if the sign is (as per Chapter 23-6.4):

- Associated with historic figures, events or places;
- Significant as evidence of the history of the product, business, or service advertised.
- Significant as reflecting the history of the building or the development of the historic district (A sign may be the only evidence of a building’s historic use).
- Characteristic of a specific historic period, such as gold leaf on glass, neon, or stainless steel lettering.
- Integral to the building’s design or physical fabric, as when a sign is a part of storefront made of Carrera glass or enamel panels, or when the name of the historic firm or the date are rendered.
- Outstanding examples of the sign maker’s art, whether because of their excellent craftsmanship, use of materials, or design.
- Recognized as local landmark, because of its prominence and popular recognition as a focal point in the community.
- Assists in defining the character of a district, as for example marquees in theater districts, or prominent neon signs associated with the proliferation of motels dependent upon the tourism industry.



5.1 Re-creation of Vagabond Motel sign, Biscayne Blvd



5.2 Designated Coppertone Girl sign, Biscayne Blvd

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### New Signs

All new signs must be in keeping with the architectural style of the structure and shall not detract from or cover over any character-defining features of the building. Even if a signage type and material is allowed within a historic district, it is not always appropriate and new designs shall be based on either historic documentation concerning the applicable structures or compatibility.

The amount of allowable sign area is calculated based on the building's linear street frontages. The total square footage of a sign cannot exceed this amount, unless the sign is grandfathered as a historic sign. All signs require a sign permit and it may be subject to additional criteria within the City Code. The appropriateness of a sign design and placement is to be determined by staff or may require HEPB approval.

**FIGURE 5.3 SIGN TYPES**



1. Projecting Sign
2. Hanging Sign
3. Wall – Building ID
4. Wall – Business ID
5. Awning Sign
6. Window Sign
7. Projecting - Above Canopy
8. Hanging Sign

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**FIGURE 5.4 COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE CHART**

SIGNAGE TYPE	
Wall	(1) per street frontage - not to exceed allowable area (Dependent upon Transect Zone)
Window	(1) sign per window - not to exceed 20% of total glass area
Projecting	Not to exceed allowable area (Dependent upon Transect Zone)
Hanging	Not to exceed allowable area (Dependent upon Transect Zone)
Awning	Limited to skirt or bottom edge of awning
Monument	No
Freestanding or Pole	Only possible for the replication of a historic sign, and only if documentation is available that shows that a freestanding or pole sign existed historically
Product Advertising	No
Portable/Sandwich Board	No
SIGNAGE MATERIALS	
Channel Letter	Yes
Neon	Yes
Stainless Steel Letters	Yes
Cabinet Sign	No
Electronic Message Signs	No
Wood Sign	Generally only appropriate for hanging signs
PVC or Acrylic Letters	No
Painted Sign	Only possible for the replication of a historic sign, and only if documentation is available that shows that a painted sign existed historically
Vinyl Banners	No, however they will be permitted for temporary use while permanent signage is manufactured

### NEW SIGN GUIDELINES

- Should be consistent with the character of the neighborhood.
- Materials and colors selected should complement and not compete with the historic structure
- Limit the amount of visual clutter placed on windows and on the façade.
- Sign placement and size should be designed with the pedestrian in mind so that the sign is visible from the right-of-way.
- New signs shall utilize any existing mounting apparatus whenever possible.
- If new holes or brackets are necessary, the installation should not damage any historic material on the structure and should be drilled through the mortar joints to avoid damage to the brick or stone.
- Structural members of all signs, including supports, electrical conduit and receptacle boxes, or any other operational devices shall be covered, painted, or designed in such a manner as to be visually unnoticeable.
- All signs must be lit and be indirect, either reverse lit, neon, or by an external source.
- For structures with multiple tenants, the owner of the property shall develop a master sign plan to standardize the appearance of the signage for each space and reduce visual clutter.

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### SIGN PLACEMENT AND MOUNTING

The placement of signs should be above the first floor and below the second floor, usually above the primary entrance and not cover over any architectural features. If a position on the structure was clearly intended for the placement of signage, the sign shall be placed in that location. The sign should also be placed to align with others located on adjacent structures and tenant spaces.

**WALL:** Locate wall signs on the area above storefront windows and below second story windows. Mounting directly on a wall should not extend out further than twelve inches from the building wall. Letters that are greater than 3" in depth can either be mounted directly on the façade or utilizing posts or railing. Letters that are less than 3" thick shall be mounted using posts or railing to offset the letters from the façade.

**WINDOW:** Window signs are applied directly to a window or mounted or suspended directly behind the window. Signs should incorporate letters, symbols, and other design elements that reflect the type of business. Sign depth shall not be made of opaque materials that obscure the view of the interior of the business.

**HANGING:** Signs suspended under a canopy or awning that is perpendicular or parallel to a building façade.

**PROJECTING:** Projecting signs should be placed perpendicular or parallel to a building facade, allowing an eight foot clearance from the sidewalk elevation.

**AWNING:** Place signs on the awning or canopy skirt or bottom edge, the portion that is parallel with the window. Install awning hardware so that it does not damage the historic structure.

***Please refer to the following as additional resources:***

Miami 21 Code: Article 10: Sign Design Standards

MiMo Design Guidelines (To be linked)

Preservation Brief 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs



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FIGURE 5.5 APPROPRIATE SIGN EXAMPLES



1. Reverse channel letter
2. Dimensional steel letters mounted on posts
3. Projecting sign
4. Wall mounted reverse channel letter and interior lit channel letter
5. Hanging sign



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6. Projecting interior lit channel letters mounted on raceway above canopy
7. Reverse channel letters mounted on raceway
8. Interior lit channel letters mounted on posts
9. Appropriately sized window signage
10. Appropriately sized window signage
11. Dimensional steel letters halo lit



## SECTION 5: SIGN DESIGN STANDARDS

FIGURE 5.6 INAPPROPRIATE AND PROHIBITED SIGNAGE EXAMPLES



More than 20% coverage of the window



Clutter created by too many signs



Interior lit cabinet sign



More than 20% coverage of the window



Interior lit cabinet sign

## SECTION 5: SIGN DESIGN STANDARDS

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### A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS IS REQUIRED WHEN...

- Installing a new sign
- Restoring or refurbishing a historic sign
- Change of signage copy on an existing sign

### ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL IS POSSIBLE FOR:

- Installation of new signage in compliance with the sign design standards
- Restoring or refurbishing a historic sign
- Change of signage copy on an existing sign

### HEP BOARD APPROVAL IS REQUIRED FOR:

- Re-creation of a historic sign based on photographic evidence
- Installation of new signage out of compliance with the sign design standards

### APPLICATION CHECKLIST

#### IS YOUR PROPERTY LOCATED IN A MULTI-TENANT SPACE?

- ☐ YES \*
- ☐ NO

*If yes, contact staff prior to selecting any signage to see if there is an existing master sign design standard on file.*

#### TYPE OF WORK:

- ☐ REPAIR ONLY
- ☐ IN-KIND REPLACEMENT
- ☐ INSTALLATION OF NEW SIGNAGE

#### ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED:

- ☐ SURVEY OF THE PROPERTY
- ☐ ONE SET OF PLANS (NO LARGER THAN 11X17)
- ☐ MATERIAL SPECIFICATION FOR PROPOSED SIGNAGE
- ☐ MATERIAL SPECIFICATION FOR LIGHTING IF EXTERNAL LIGHTING IS TO BE USED
- ☐ PHOTOS OF THE FULL FRONT FAÇADE AND LOCATION(S) OF SIGNAGE PLACEMENT
- ☐ HISTORIC PICTURE, IF AVAILABLE